

A RESOLUTION BY
THE SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER OF
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Concerning the James River of Eastern South Dakota

WHEREAS the James River is a significant and precious natural resource for South Dakota, providing valuable and necessary habitat for many species of mammals, colonial nesting marsh and water birds, waterfowl, neotropical passerines, and many species of sportfish; and

WHEREAS the James River provides countless hours of recreation for hunting, fishing, furbearer trapping, canoeing, birding, and nature study; and

WHEREAS the James River Water Development District (District) and the Omaha District of the Corps of Engineers (Corps) have announced plans to complete an Environmental Impact Study on the James River; and

WHEREAS the James River has a high flood frequency, a relatively low channel capacity, and a very low gradient; and

WHEREAS the Lake Plain Reach of the River (extending from the ND/SD state line south to near Highway 212) is characterized by a very low gradient (< 1 inch/mile), a broad, well defined floodplain, a highly meandered channel, and a very low channel capacity (~200 cfs); and

WHEREAS chronic flooding on the River will likely not be resolved by specified channel improvement practices which would only serve to exacerbate flooding downstream of the Lake Plain Reach of the River; and

WHEREAS other alternatives exist which could offset the effects of flooding within the Lake Plain Reach, help attenuate flooding further downstream, be more compatible with fish and wildlife habitat needs and recreational opportunities, and negate the need to employ additional “restoration” practices; and

WHEREAS many previous studies and evaluations of the James River have recommended that future efforts to minimize flooding impacts on the James must be found through appropriate long-term local management and protection of the floodplain

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this organization recommends that the Corps and the District strongly consider and evaluate, as an Alternative in the EIS process, the conservation and restoration of the floodplain, within the Lake Plain Reach and the remaining portions of the river, by restoring the natural hydrology.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this organization believes that the Floodplain Management Concept, which would utilize the natural storage capabilities of the floodplain while compensating landowners for their potential loss of economic uses in the floodplain, is an

alternative which can be economically effective in conserving the natural and beneficial values of the James River.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to the Omaha District of the Corps of Engineers, the James River Water Development District, the Governor of the State of South Dakota, and any other interested party.

Adopted this 12th day of March, 2002 at the annual meeting of the South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Chamberlain, SD.